Audiences as Sources of Information Due To Innovation and Technology in the Media

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ABSTRACT
Harold Lasswell’s communication model of 1948 describes effective communication as comprising of elements of who said what, to whom, in what channel and with what effect. This notion has however changed over the years with the ever changing technological innovations in the media. From the era of the hypodermic needle theory when communication flow was one way and the effects were definite to the uses and gratification era where audiences consume and utilise the media based on their social needs. The credibility of the media is therefore at stake as the information explosion has created an environment where there are no rules, ethics and professionalism. This has therefore interfered with the mandate of the media as a sole source of information to the society. Fake and controversial news are the order of the day and both the media and the audiences have been victims. The purpose of this study is to analyse the extent to which the new media has affected the information flow cycle. The study purposes to utilize content analysis of specific purposefully selected new stories in the print media as well as their online versions that made headlines in the country in 2017. The year was characterised by major events such as the general election, several labour related strikes, controversial deaths and political unrest in the country. The news story selection will be informed by the number of hits per news text. The findings of this study will inform stakeholder decisions on key policy formulation in news dissemination. The recommendations will inform on how the new media can be fused with the current practises to ensure harmony and restoration of media credibility.

Keywords: New Media, Media Credibility, Information Explosion, Communication Process, Technology.